the COMIC READER

30¢ No. 42

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADEMY OF COMIC BOOK FANS AND COLLECTORS
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY DERRILL ROTHERMICH, ROLLA, MISSOURI

THE COMIC READER is edited and published monthly by Derrill Rothermich. TCR is a non-profit amatuer fanzine published for the enjoyment of comic fans.

Well, here it is!! The new-look TCR! For the last several months I have been hard at work to make TCR the best possible zine and whether I have succeeded or not is up to you. Let me know what you think of this issue. Any complaints? Naturally there will be some and I will see what I can do to change the situation. I want to take this opportunity to thank those who have given me valuable support and help--especially Glen Johnson, Jerry Bails, John Ryan, and Biljo White. Also I wish to thank all of those who voted for me in the Academy elections. I appreciate this great honor.

As some of you may notice, I have incorporated some of the suggestions I have already received and went against others but only when I felt that they weren't in the best interest of TCR. We may still disagree but I will leave the final decision up to the majority of the readers. One of these points is the increased amount of art present. I must admit that I hadn't planned all that is present but it is there. Do you approve or disapprove? Personally I think that GOOD art should be welcome in any zine at any time. As for as I can tell right now, there will be less in the next issue. My thanks to Kent Russell for furnishing the Steve Ditko art at the top of this page.

I had been planning a shorter issue for this month (about 14 pages) but as often happens, this didn't last long. I kept receiving more material and as a result this issue is 18 pages. As I explained last issue, this isn't less material but actually more. This issue is equivalent to Glen's 24 pages making this issue one of the longest yet published. As things look at this moment the next few issues should easily run between 18 and 20 pages each. Some readers have asked why I don't make TCR a newspaper like VOC. First I don't have the time and secondly there is just too much in TCR and such a move would reduce TCR's size down to 10 pages which isn't much help. So for the time being, TCR will keep its present format. I hadn't planned on this issue being so centralized. However, after two different fans refused to do the THUNDER review, I had to do it myself to get it into this issue. Next month, Glen will handle this chore with illoes by Howard Keltner.

The EGO CRUSHER has been turned over to Jim King. Since I am a good friend of his I don't want to jump off the deep end by trying to give an honest evaluation as to his effort. However I would not have let him do it if I wasn't convinced he could do a good job. I can say that he did his best to be entirely fair yet retain a certain degree of strictness. Before he writes his reviews we thoroughly discuss each zine so I can't really say that the opinions stated aren't at least partially mine. However, any comments in individual columns should NEVER be taken as anybody's viewpoint except the author's alone. And unless otherwise stated is most definitely NOT the official view of the Academy. If you want you zine reviewed, send it to Jim and he will do so as soon as possible. This month's column is a double one for the simple reason that both of us were too busy to do one last month.

You will notice that page 5 is a reproduction of a photograph of some of Sal Trapani's Nukla art. I know this is a repetition from last issue but I think this is necessary because Glen's attempt at printing it was anything but successful. It is just one of those handicaps that is a part of ditto. Now that TCR is offset I shouldn't have any of those problems. Personally I am as anxious to see how TCR is going to look as any of you are. Several fans have asked me how I can do TCR offset for only a nickel more. Well, as I said last issue, I can't! However I am doing it anyway. I am going to loose money on almost every issue, including this one.

I have received samples of art from several fans as well as some articles. I continue to solicite but am under no obligation to print it. I am forced to reject some good work only upon the grounds that I just don't have the room for it. As a result I might hold some material for quite a while before using itbut don't worry. If I keep work it will be used. As always in the past contributors will receive free issues.

Right now much of the next two issues are already set. The first segment of Ronn Foss' FOX will be in TCR #43. The Fox first appeared in D:C back in 1963 where it proved extremely popular. It ran for six segments and then ended. When Ronn found out that I was going to switch to offset, he decided to wait and redo Fox entirely by that method. As soon as he gets settled in Florida he will begin work on it and Fox will most definitely be in #43. In addition to Fox, Ronn is also going to do an illo of Viking Prince. However just when this will appear is hard to say. Also scheduled for #43 is another Question Corner column by Ray Miller, "The Great Migration" by Bob Jennings, and a great cover by Gary Povlin. I also hope to have the first of a new column by John Ryan but I haven't heard from him lately so I don't know for sure about this. Are you still with me John? His first column--whenever it appears--should give information on two panels that were censored out of a Silver Starr strip.

The December issue will again have the annual Alley Poll. Be sure you don't miss that one. Also tentatively scheduled for that issue is another Picto-Origin by Bill Dubay. I have half a Comic Mirror column done which may also be in that issue. This one has Dollman and Atom. Paul Moslander has done the part on The Mighty Atom but I am having trouble finding someone to do the article on Dollman. Any volunteers?

As you read this issue you will undoubtably find many typing mistakes. These are purely unintentional. None of us are professional typist and so such errors are bound to creep in. However I realize that even one is too many and will do my best to see that there are none present in the next issue.

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All material for TCR has to reach me by the first of the month to appear in that month's issue.

Cost of TCR is $ .25 to Academy supporting members and $ .30 to non-members. Air mail subscriptions for overseas fans are $ .50 for members and $ .60 for non-members. I will send TCR in manila envelopes if you send these and add a 5¢ stamp to each or for an additional dime per issue I will furnish the envelope and stamp. I will start accepting subs for $1.50 after you receive TCR #43.

Only ads accepted in advance will run in TCR. Send an s.a.e. for a reply as to whether your ad is accepted. Please check with me regarding size of any illustrated ads you may want to run. New ad rates are $2.00 per half page and $4.00 per full page. (Policy continued on page 4)

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DEDICATED TO: STEVE DITKO

MURRAY BOLTINOFF. Miss liberty was well received on her reappearance and will be back again as soon as a new tale can be written. As for as the reaction to Beast-Boy--"What a reaction! In the 20-odd years I've been in this business, seldom have I seen such a riotous response. We're absolutely being inundated with mail. Beast-Boy will reappear in the next issue (#100) which goes on sale October 21. Coincidentally enough (?) the name of the story is "The Fantastic Originof Beast-Boy." It's my guess that one day he will make an appearance with the Teen Titans." The first part of the Doom Patrol-Challangers team-up will be in CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN #48. Mento will appear along with the Challengers for a follow-up tale in DOOM PATROL #102.

TARZAN ON TV. Sy Weintraub and his Banner Productions have signed a contract with NBC-TV for Tarzan to be a one-hour color show each week during the 1966-67 season. Mike Henry will be the star. A new Tarzan movie will be released after January 1, 1966 and another is being filmed on location in Rio de Janeiro right now,It, too, will probably be released before the TV series begins. Both these films star Mike. They will no doubt be great advertising for the TV shows, since in addition to the appeal of the character himself, the public will also have Mike Henry's name on their lips due to the two movie releases. Location shots, background, etc. for the TV series will be taken in Brazil in addition to the movies.

CREATOR OF SUPERMAN NOW WORKING FOR ARCHIE. "The writer and artist of STEEL STERLING are Jerry Siegel and Paul Reinman. Siegel, in case you didn't know writes most of ARCHIE'S adventure stuff. According to the info they are trying to make a plotting switch." It was reported in TCR sometime ago that Siegel was writing the SHADOW, but not many fans believed this. The editor of the ARCHIE line is Richard Goldwater, who replaced Harry Shorten about 8 years ago. Shorten is now publisher of TOWER PUBLICATIONS. TOWER is distributed by the same company as ARCHIE. Look for more giant adventure-hero comics from TOWER and more super-hero comics from ARCHIE.

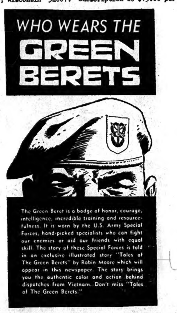
FIGHTING AMERICAN. "No definite plans concerning FIGHTING AMERICAN have been made." According to Mr. Simon, they are "still dickering."

NEXT TV CRAZE? It is entirely possible that the next big TV crase will see the super-spy replaced by the super-hero. In addition to Tarzan, BATMAN will also be an ABC-TV show during the 1966-67 year. Dozier has been given the go-ahead on a pilot film. Other productions that are possible include new Superman segments plus Aquaman. I can think of quite a few better choices but maybe they will get their chances latter.

MORE ON TARZAN. John Celardo has been adapting the ERB stoyy "Tarzan And The Champion" to the comic strip format in the Sunday pages. I don't know whether or not the story has been completed yet. ERB's version of this story can found in TARZAN AND THE CASTAWAYS (Ballantine, 50¢)

PHANTOM DETECTIVE. Regency Books has reprinted two PHANTOM DETECTIVE pulps in paperback: THE VAMPIRE MURDERS and THE DANCING DOLL MURDERS. Coming soon: THE BEAST-KING MURDERS.

TALES OF THE GREEN BERETS. As you can see from the advertisement below, this new strip is about our Special Forces in action. However, what it doesn't say is that the artist of this strip is JOE KUBERT. Years ago Joe tried to break into the strip format with Tor but never made it. Now he has finally met with success. This started nation-wide distribution on Sept. 20. However, if you can't get hold of it in a local paper, you can get it in The Evening Telegram, 1225 Tower Avenue, Superior, Wisconsin 54881. Subscription is $15.00 per year.



MORE FROM HARVEY The creator of ATLAS and THE DYNO-MEN is Calvin Castime. ATLAS will be basically the same as the mythological god except that he will be average-sized. The original plan called for 7 Dyno-Men but this was cut to three. STRETCH has the power of stretching to great lengths; BULLDOZER is invulnerable and capable of speeds up to 60 mph; and HURRICANE has the power of hurricane breath. First opponent will tentatively be THUNDERMAN. These super-heroes are still in the discussion stage. As a result, it will be a while before they might appear on the stands. Two other possibles include THE MASKED AVENGER and CAPTAIN COURAGE AND CORKY.

PETER SCRATCH. This new strip syndicated by Newsday, Inc. replaced Dan Flagg in the St. Louis Globe on September 13. It served to answer a question I have been asking for a long time. In case you can't tell by the two strips here, the artist is Lou Fine. I am willing to trade this strip to anyone who can't find it in one of your local papers.

MINITURE COMICS. This is a give-away to be found in Cracker Jacks as a free prize. It is a $1\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 3/4, and has 32 pages plus cover. Stars Ricky Macy, Junior Detective.

HELP! The new Beatles movie "HELP" has several scenes in their apartment. If you watch, you will see a large display of DC comic books on the organ

MONSTERCON?? September 18 was the date of the 1965 New York Monstercon. It took place from 1 to 4 at Loew's Midtown Motor Inn on Eighth Avenue & 48th Street. It was a reception for Forry Ackerman put on by Jim Warren.

PEANUTS ON TV. A Peanuts television show based on the popular comic strip will debut on December 9, 1965 at 7:30 pm. Charlex Schulz will write the continuity and dialogue for the show while also doing the basic layouts. It will be on CBS-TV as a half hour color show.

CAPTAIN MARVEL ON AMOS BURKE? On the September 29 segment of Amos Burke, one of the chief villain's muscle men relaxed by reading a Captain Marvel comic. Wonder where he got it? Another thing, why are comic readers usually pictured as cheap hoods or dumb chorus girls? I think we should protest!! But where?

SUPERMAN CARDS. Topps is putting out Superman trading cards. The stories on the backs are those of the TV tales. Each series consists of 66 black and white scenes clipped from the TV tapes. The backs of cards #1-44 have written materialon them while #45-56 form a large line drawing of Superman. The backs of #57-66 form a large photo of George Reeves as Superman.

THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES. According to PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, this book by Jules Feiffer will be published by Dial Press, 461 Park Avenue South, New York City. The October issue of Playboy has a nine page article by this name by Jules. Evidently this is taken directly from the book. If you can't afford the book, don't miss this. If the rest of the book is near as good as this sample, no price would be to high.

COMIC STRIPS AND THE MOVIES! Comic strip characters are likely to be the fashion in cinema during 1966. Federico Fellini said recently that he saw James Bond as a modern Flash Gordon and that his new film--TULIET OF THE SPIRITS--has been visually inspired by the two-dimensional characteristics of the comic strips. Mandrake, a strip created as long ago as 1934, is about to start filming in Italy. Also, so is Diabolik. There will soon be a film of the French strip Barbarella and Britain's Modesty Blaise.

PAUL REINMAN. Radio Comics has formed a subsidiary called "The Mighty Comics Group". All the members of the Mighty Crusaders are getting their own books. The first issue of Steel Sterling has been completed and should be out shortly. There was a slight delay on account of the slow season in sales. "What we are striving for is the flavor of the old comics of the late thirties and forties. There won't be any stories to be continued. We won't bring in the cold or hot wars. We also found out that love is better left to other type of mags. The reader's responce to Fly Girl has been lukewarm. Most of our coming stories will be the strange and the bizarre line. We will also bring more "Origins Of ---" stories of our characters. At the moment, I'm able to handle all the necessary art work myself."

NEWS SOURCES: Glen Johnson, Richard Rubenfeld, Andrew Yanchus, Ron Fradkin, Barry Brooks, L. L. Simpson, J. Randolph Cox, Jerry Pritchett, Gary Crowdus, Murray Boltinoff, Jeremy Barry, Rick Weingroff, Steven Johnson.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Derrill Rothermich, c/o Jim King, Box 801, Rolla, Missouri

When ordering TCR please state the issue you want. If that issue is sold out, I will send the current issue. Print run for this issue is 400.

If you would like a quick reply from me and you are not a regular correspondent, send a s.a.e. Otherwise your answer will be sent with the next issue of TCR. In fact, when you request information from any extremely busy fan, this is advisable. Not only will it be a service to the fan but it will help you get an answer quicker.

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Nukla--Dell
Phantom--Gold Key
No Man, Dynamo, Menthor--Tower
Peter Scratch--Newsday, Inc.

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Space Museum--Paul Thompson
Ego Crusher--Jim King
Robotman--Doug Potter
Whizzer--Derrill Rothermich

NUK
BEST WISHES
SAL TRAPANI

ON THE LINE

A regular column devoted to discussion of comics and comic-fandom.

THE MAGIC MISTAKE

by Bob Jennings

Most readers of this column have, I'm sure, been following the two contributions to the super-hero market from ACG. Perhaps you have read with a steadily developing sense of disgust, as I have, while the two heroes blunder and smash their ways clumsily thru their stories, each adventure somehow seeming a little more unappetising and unsatisfying than the previous one. Many fans have already written both Magicman and Nemisis off as total losses so far as any hope of comic quality is concerned. Others doggedly hang on to the fringes, hoping for a miracle which might save two potentially dynamic characters.

I was surprised to learn that many people are unaware that Magicman, Nemisis and the super-spy, John Force are not the first heroes ACG has produced in its long and varied career. The group, as a unit, came into existence shortly before World War II, hired for the job when the Thrilling line of pulps suddenly learned that comic books were beginning to sell almost as well as the weekly pulp magazines. A short series of comics, most of them adventure and super-hero slanted, began appearing. The most prominent members of the group were STARTLING COMICS, THRILLING COMICS, EXCITING COMICS, and AMERICA'S BEST. STARTLING COMICS produced their first star, named Captain Future, who bore absolutely no resemblence to the same character in the pulps. Cap Future was sort of poor man's Superman, complete with a meek, bespectacled alterego. He held the lead spotlight only a few issues, however, soon losing both opening story and covers to the Fighting Yank, a red-blooded all-American patriot with a poor background and art to match. Black Commando was another of the line's leaders. He had little to recommend him except a colorful costume. Dramatically and artistically the best hero of the group was an ordinary human adventurer named Doc Strange, who ran things in THRILLING COMICS. There were a number of other super-heroes, of lesser fame, about which we need not go into detail

These heroes battled their way thru World War II with reasonable financial success. Reading back over them today one wonders how they managed to survive at all, for the art was crude, and the stories were all stereotyped. Each issue had the hero, whoever he might be, along with his faithful female or teenage partner, swinging into action against the Nazis. Sometimes it was a spy ring, sometimes enemy troops on the battlefield, but every story no matter where the setting was short on plotwork and long on action. The pages were filled with flying super-humans ripping up squadrons of bombers, sinking enemy fleets, wrecking enemy instillations and wiping up enemy troops. One wonders at times how the enemy could have survived the fearsome slaughter produced in a single issue, let alone a whole five or six years of it. If you have read one of the stories, you've read them all; action was the keyword and logical development, consistent background, or realism were all brushed aside in the grand malee which continued uninterrupted right up thru the signing of the final peace treaties, and even a few issues thereafter. This crew of heroes faded rather quickly after the war, and when they were washed away forever, the group which had produced the comics formed their own company known as the American Comics Group.

ACG specialized in horror comics at first, very good horror comics. The art was well developed, and the stories were astonishingly good, considering the period and the general content of horror comics. In a sea of muck ACG stood upright like a lighthouse against the storm, and when the horror comics were washed away, the company switched to producing science-fantasy stories. In my opinion their works of the middle fifties were the finest examples of comic science fiction produced during that decade.

But towards the latter part of the period they began to falter. They switched to different styles of stories, most of them aimed at a younger audience. It is difficult to estimate how their sales were doing at this time, since according to the editor and the letter page, they had always been top sellers. In reality I would suspect that their one romance comic was carrying most of the weight for the whole company. When the super-heroes began making a comeback, ACG decided to take a chance.

John Force, Magic Agent, was his name, issued at a time when super-spies hardly fitted the comic world. He had a brilliant start, and quickly dropped in quality art, and sales. This failure so soured the company that it wasn't until late 1963, after consistent prodding from many of their readers, that they tried again. The results were Magicman and Nemisis.

Basically the two heroes are very much alike. Magicman, according to the origin revealed in FORBIDDEN WORLDS #126, was the son of the French wizard Caglistro, and he either learned, or inherited via genetic structure (the point is never made clear), much of his father's magical skill. His father was captured by soldiers for practicing witchcraft, but the son managed to escape. For two centuries he lives and wandered, surpressing his magic ability, never aging much, keeping out of the way, until finally he joined the American army in the identity of Tom Cargill. As Cargill he is made a soldier in a special forces unit (or so his uniform would indicate), and is sent to Viet Nam. Here he meets Sergeant Kilkenny, who at this time is a thin, wiry, red-haired soldier with a nasty disposition. When his best friend is killed by the Reds, and a visiting senator is kidnapped, he makes a costume from theatrical clothing at the post, and flies out to reek vengeance on the communists as Magicman. In the panels that follow, he smashes a Red helicopter, breaks a dam which drowns an enemy column, destroys at least one jeep and one tank, blows up an enemy fortress, annihilates a squadron of jets, smashes into Communist strategy headquarters, and rescues the senator. Among his many powers we learn that he can fly, he is apparently invulnerable, he hurls lightening from his fingertips, he has super strength, he teleports, he has hypnotic powers in his eyes which force his opponents to tell him the truth, and he can create living creatures out of thin air on the spur of the moment. This last ability should put him one up on God, since it took the Diety a full day to create life.

For all his powers, Magicman is a maze of inconsistencies. He is able to smash thru a block wall yet when anti-aircraft shells burst near, he is afraid one might strike him. He is super-powerful, yet a burst of nerve gas renders him helpless, and for all his magical abilities, he finds he must disguise himself as an old man to get into the Communist post to save the senator. In future issues we find he possess many other powers. He can make objects disintegrate, he has "second sight" to learn where trouble develops, he can travel into the past, bend a steel tank into a pretzel with his bare hands, and he even manages to beat off attacks by ghosts. At the same time all this and much more is going on, we find he can be stopped by electrical energy(which he controls with his hands in every story), kayoed by a simple lump on the head, and is even so helpless that an attempt to brainwash him almost succeeds. As you can see, the parts fail to fit together into a logical whole. There is something rather ridiculous about a hero who can survive a landslide of granite boulders, and yet succumbs to a blow on the head.

Clearly Magicman is a series of contradictions, and his partner over in ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN is in hardly better shape. Nemisis, however, is gifted with a more colorful costume and a more interesting origin story. As rough, tough detective Steve Flint, he is hired to find the reason for sabotage and work stoppage at government instillations. In doing so, he learns that the Mafia, led by a one-eyed criminal named Goratti is causing the whole business. In attempting to clean up part of the gang, Goratti manages to grind him to grease with a locomotive engine and--in accordance with ACG mythology--Flint's spirit immediately heads for the Unknown, a nebulous place way up yonder where all spirits sooner or later come to dwell.

However, Flint refuses to be checked in peacefully. He argues with the Grim Reaper that he must go back to finish his business on earth. The Grim Reaper tells him such things are strictly forbidden. Satan even makes an appearance warning that to allow Flint to return sould be like striking against the Devil himself, and the Devil could make a very formidable enemy. Not discouraged, Flint probes deeper, and we learn that there is a sort of succession of Grim Reapers, and that this one used to own a little night spot in Chicago, when it was bombed by the Mafia. Flint discovers that the killer is none other than his own enemy, Groatti. With vengeance in his soul, the Grim Reaper outfits Flint in his costume, gives him a name, and sends him back to even the score. It takes three issues to do this, during which time the villain is killed and becomes a ghost, works as Satan's good right arm, leads an invasion of the Unknown, and Nemisis must defeat the Devil himself.

Despite all this, I somehow manage to find Nemisis a rather interesting hero. His costume and background lend themselves to a good series of adventures, if he were liberated from the same problems which beset Magicman, namely, too broad a delineation of powers and weaknesses, an inconsistent background, and no real story plotting. Nemisis has an earthly girl-friend, and while the phantom lover theme has been milked to the bone in folk legend and song, the concept is fairly new in comics, and it gives Nemisis some much needed personality development. Sergeant Kilkenny, Magicman's sidekick, is nothing more than a crude attempt at slap-

stick humor, one which seldom comes off successfully, and does more to slow the story than to broaden its horizons.

Part of the difficulity is that both Nemisis and Magicman are not modern day heroes. They are cleverly revenanted anachronisms. They belong in the past where good backgrounds and consistent story development didn't really matter. We see in the stories of both these characters many of the same basic flaws which stalked the heroes, combined in a flurry of dynamic but often very senseless action. The stories today are better written and the art is vastly superior to the product of the far past, but the spirit still dwells on. Action, in particular, seems to be the keyword. Action is directed against any convenient enemy or obstical for no really rational purpose. Magicman has uncontrolled amounts of powers at his command, yet he wastes his time attacking a single tank, knocking out one man, going to complicated extremes to solve problems any six-year-old child could solve instantly. Nemisis, on call for the Unknown as a sort of spiritual trouble shooter, manages to take pages to round up a few thugs armed only with guns, and his stupidity in these cases belies his former occupation as a detective. Both heroes consistently run 'round and 'round Robin Hood's barn for pages before they stumble across a solution to their difficulties. Such senseless, undirected action does not do the stories any good.

The plot inconsistances reach all the way back to the origin stories and develop in spider mazes from there. In addition to those we have named for Magicman, it would seem strange indeed that Caglistro, the great wizard, should be captured by mere soldiers instead of using some of his powers to save himself from execution. According to the Grim Reaper, all spirits are expressly forbidden to return to earth, yet in almost every Nemisis story, dozens, even hundreds, manage to cross the gap without interference. Amid the smashing of machinery and the moving of worlds, the alert reader can discover flaws on virtually every page of the stories. There is little to hold interest beyond sophomoric demonstrations of brute strength and a rattling chain of wisecracks.

ACG apparently has not yet discovered a universal truth which the other companies have already learned, namely, that comic readers today are different from those of the forties. It takes more than a fancy costume and unlimited powers to sell comics today, and readers of the sixties are better educated, more literate, and more sophisticated than their counterparts of twenty years past. Furthermore, they exercise greater judgement in their buying and reading habits. Another factor of prime importance for all comic companies is the fact that there are only about half as many buyers of comics today as there were in the forties. Comics no longer have the same wide distribution as previously, and all the companies must share those readers with each other. Only the fittest are able to survive for long, and the fittest invariably have the kind of art and stories which readers will buy. This does not, fortunately, include unlimited, raw action with no story to back it up. If a comic is to reach the top of the sales list, it must be able to provide its readers with consistently interesting stories, logical background, and presentable art.

And thus far ACG does not manage to qualify in those first two catagories. Artwise they are in somewhat better shape. Pete Costanza handles Magicman, a pro with an adapt touch which I don't think can be improved on. Nemisis, however, is now being handled by Chic Stone. Stone is undoubtedly one of the finest inking artists in the business, but he leaves much to be desired in the pencil department. His work has given Nemisis a shallow, washedout look which may eventually hurt sales, if it has not already. The solution would be to slide another pencil artist into the strip. The artist makes no difference; Stone's inks can turn anybody's pencils into masterpieces, anybody's pencils but his own, that is.

Without a doubt ACG is making money with their two creations. After the low sales from their science fiction comics, the addition of any costumed characters in this age of super-heroes would have boosted sales. But they are falling short of their inherent potential. It is interesting to notice that ACG used the long sale on many of their comics. The recent issue of FORBIDDEN WORLDS was dated Nov-Dec 1965 but I bought it in early August. Since all magazines are picked up on the date listed on their covers, this gives #132 a good three months to reach the buying audience. This often means that two, or even three, issues of the same title are on the stands at the same time. The longer the display period, the more chance there will be that someone will buy the issue. Presumably too, if a reader liked one issue, and could find others still on the stands, he would buy them also. The prolonged sales pitch is an indicator that the books are not selling as ACG would like for us to believe. A truely popular character, like the Marvels and some of the DC books, sell out in two weeks and stick pretty much to a monthly schedule.

Potentially both Magicman and Nemisis are top-notch characters. Both have good costumes, and given stable powers, both could be woven into interesting stories. But unless ACG is willing to treat its readers like thinking human beings instead of sub-normal morons, and unless they are willing to catch up to the times and treat their characters like the heroes they could be, there will be no development towards better stories. Shortly, in fact, there will be no Magicman or Nemisis.

COMICDOM'S GREATEST CONTEST

100 FABULOUS PRIZES--ORIGINAL ART, RARE COMICS, and PHOTO-TALES

All you do to win is supply data from your comics collection!! In doing so, you help hasten the publication of a Complete Index to the Golden Age of Comics!! Even small collectors have a good chance to win by combining their entries! Just follow the Contest Rules below, enter as often as possible, and you stand to win one of these fabulous prizes:

FIRST PRIZE: A starter collection of original comic art--10 panels from 10 different strips: Magnus, Elongated Man, Hourman-Dr. Fate, Phantom, Doom Patrol, Metamorpho, Dr. Solar, Justice League, Tarzan, and one page from a GOLDEN AGE STRIP!!!
10 SECOND PRIZES: A beautiful photo-reproduction of a famous origin-story from the GOLDEN AGE. One of the following: Spectre, Plastic Man, Angel, Human Torch vs. Sub-Mariner, or Flash.
25 THIRD PRIZES: One page of original art.
25 FOURTH PRIZES: A mint copy of a rare issue published during the early years of the SECOND HEROIC AGE of Comics.
30 FIFTH PRIZES: A collector's copy of a foreign comics magazine.

CONTEST RULES:
(1) Each entry must be submitted on a 3"x5" index card (or facsimile and include the following data for any one of the issues listed below: TITLE, ISSUE NUMBER, COMPLETE DATE, PUBLISHER, LIST OF COVER FEATURES, LIST OF TITLES OF ALL STRIPS PLUS THE NUMBER OF PAGES OF EACH STRIP. (Optional: Please give names of artists and writers, if this information is given.) Use a separate card for each issue. If data for one issue is too much for one card, staple 2 or more cards together.
(2) Put your name and address on the back of each card to receive credit. Entries do not have to be mailed all together.
(3) If more than one card for an issue is submitted, the earliest with complete information will be counted.
(4) Contest will run until December 31, 1965. Prizes will be awarded for the largest number of complete and accurate data cards. Winners' names will be published in THE COMIC READER.

(5) Groups of fans may pool their entries by submitting all their entries under the name of a single member of the group.
(6) Send all data cards to: Jerry Bails, 22529 Karam Court, Warren, Michigan.

ISSUES FOR WHICH DATA IS NEEDED:

ACE #1-151
ADVENTURE #32-50
AIR ACE v2 #1 through v3 #8
AIRBOY #23-v10 #4
AIRFIGHTERS #1-22
ALL TOP #1-6
ALL WINNERS #1 (August 1948)
AMAZING MAN #1-4, 21, 22, 24, 26
AMAZING MYSTERY FUNNIES (all)
ARMY AND NAVY #1-5
THE ARROW #2
ATOMIC BOMB (all)
BIG SHOT #21, 22, 29
BIG THREE #1-7
BILL BARNES #1-12
BLACKHAWK #9 16 on
BLONDE PHANTOM #20
BLUE BEETLE #3, 11, 17, 20, 23-26, 30, 43, 60
BLUE BOLT v7 #5-8, v8 #2-12, v9 #1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10?, 11?, 12?, v10 #2 (#101) 104-106
BLUE CIRCLE #1-5
BOMBER #1-4
BOOK OF COMICS (all)
BOUNCER #1-14
BOY (all)
BULLETMAN #13, 15
CAPTAIN AREO #1, 2, 12, 15-20, 23-25
CAPTAIN BATTLE JR. #1, 2
CAPTAIN FEARLESS #2, 3
CAPTAIN FIGHT #1-10
CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT #4, 5, 9-17, 19-67
CHAMP #18, 25-29
CHAMPION #1, 4, 6, 9
CHOICE #1-3
CIRCUS #1-3
CLUE #1, 12, 13, 15
COLOSSUS (all)
COMEDY #10-24
COMIC PAGES (all)
COMICS DIGEST (all)
THE COMICS MAGAZINE (all)
THE COMICS MAN (all)
COMICS ON PARADE #1-61
CONTACT #1-11
CRASH #1-5
CYCLONE (all)
DAREDEVIL #84-86, 90, 92, 97-124, 132
DARING #9
DETECTIVE #1-32
DETECTIVE EYE #2
DETECTIVE PICTURE STORIES (all)
DOC SAVAGE #1-20
DOLLMAN #2, 22
DYNAMIC #4-8, 17, 18, 25
FAMOUS FUNNIES #1-218
FANTASTIC #17, 21 on
FANTOMAN #1-3
FEATURE #40-46
FIGHT #72-76
FIGHTING YANK #5, 9, 15, 25-29
FIREHAIR #2 on
FOUR FAVORITES #29-31
FOUR MOST v3 #4
FRANKENSTEIN #1-v3 #3
THE FUNNIES #1-65
FUNNY PAGES #1-42
FUNNY PICTURE STORIES (all)
FUTURE #1-4
GIFT #1, 2 (others?)
GOLDEN LAD #1-5
GREAT #1-3
GREEN LAMA #7, 8
GREEN MASK #2
HEADLINE #1-22
HELLO PAL #1-3
HEROIC #1-97
HI SPOT #1, 2
HOLIDAY (all)
JACKPOT #10, 11?
JUMBO #1-8
KAANGA (all)
KEEN DETECTIVE FUNNIES (all)
KEY #1-3
KID KOMICS #1-11
KING #1-159
KNOCK KNOCK (all)
KO (all)
LUCKY #1-3
MAGIC #1-123
MAN O' WAR #1, 2
MARVEL FAMILY #79
MARVEL MYSTERY #45
MASKED MARVEL #1, 2
MASTER #1-8, 12-15, 106, 130-132
MIRACLE #1-4
MISS AMERICA #1-10
MISS FURY #1-8
MOON GIRL #1, 4
MORE FUN #7-50
MYSTERY #1, 2
NATIONAL #1
NEW #1-31
NEW FUN #1-6
NYOKA #1-77
OKAY (all)
PEP #48
PHANTOM LADY #17-23
PLANET #6, 7, 73
POLICE #104-125
POPULAR #1-145
PRIZE #5, 6, 40, 50, 62, 66
PUNCH (all)
PUNCH AND JUDY (all)
RANGERS #56-69
REAL LIFE #1-59
RED BAND #1-3
RED DRAGON #1-9
ROCKET #1-3
SCOOP (all)
SEA HOUND #1, 2
SHADOW #1-107
SHEENA #1, 6-10, 14, 19 on
SHIELD-WIZARD #7, 12-14

SILVER STREAK #3, 11, 22, 24
SKY BLAZERS #1, 2
SLAM BANG #1-6
SPARKLER (all first series)
SPARKLER #1-121
SPARKLING STARS #1-18
SPIRIT (all)
SPITFIRE #1, 2
STAR #1-13
STAR-STUDDED (all)
STARS AND STRIPS #1-6
SUPER #1-121
SUPER MAGICIAN (all)
SUPER MYSTERY # 30?, 31?
SUPERSNIPE #6-v5 #1
SUPER SPY (all)
SUPERWORLD #1-3
TARGET v1 #1-4, v4 #2-4, v7 #6, v8 #2-12, v9 #3-12, v10 #1-3
THRILLING #68, 70
TIP TOP #1-210
TONY TRENT, THE FACE #4
TOP-NOTCH #4
TOP-NOTCH LAUGH #36, 42
TOUGH KID SQUAD (all)
V.. #1, 2
WAMBI #1 on
WEIRD #19 on
WESTERN PICTURE STORIES (all)
WHAM (all)
WHIRLWIND #1, 2
WONDERWORLD #34?
XMAS (all)
YANKEE #5, 6
YELLOWJACKET #1-9

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The following comics and related material are for sale or trade. Trades have priority! If comic has no listed price it's for trade or up for bid. If you have something I want extremely bad, and you never know what it might be, I'll give you a very good deal. 10¢ extra for insurance. I am not responsible for lost packages! I pay postage on all orders over $5.00--all else add at least 25¢. Good hunting! P--poor, M--mint, nbc--no back cover, nc--no cover. Any body want a Leading #15 for 25¢? How about Mutt & Jeff #43,91,32, 37, 40 or True #73, 15, 55P, 43, 63 or Jack Armstrong#2, 4, 5. All for 25¢ each except True #15 and Jack Armstrongs--50¢ each.

Alan Ladd #3 (1950 DC)--35¢ Action #155 (1951 DC)--35¢ (pps out) Action #147 (1950 DC)--75¢; 219, 247, 253--20¢ (pages out) Boy#80 (1952 Lev Gleason)--35¢ Blackhawk #81, 106 (Quality)--50¢ Cave Girl #12 (1953 ME, Powell art)--75¢ Captain Jet-Farrell #3 ('52) --35¢ Captain Easy #11 (1948 reprint-P)--75¢ Dynamic #24 ('48) (Canadian)--50¢ Feature #115, 118 (Quality)--$1.00; 106M--$2.00 Fight #50 (1947 nbc)--$1.25; 73 (1951)--50¢ 4 Most v6 #2 (1947) --35¢ Famous Author Illustrated #10, 12--25¢ Flame #2 (1955, Farrell)--50¢ Feature Book #50 (1947 Perry Mason)--$1.00 Golden Lad #2 (1945)--$1.50 Jungle #157 (1953)--50¢ Jumbo #98 (1947), 121 (1949)--$1.00; 149 (1951 cp)--75¢ Kid Eternity #2--$1.00; 6, 15--75¢ Katzenjammer Kids #10 (1949)--75¢ Nyoka #46 (1950)--50¢ Phantom Lady #5 (1954)--75¢ Picture Stories fromthe Bible #1 (1942 DC)--$1.50 Red Ryder #22 (1944 reprint pages out) --75¢ Superboy #37, 43 (1954, 1955)--35¢ Superman #47, 51, 55, 61--$1.25; 42--$2.00 Target #85 (1946)--50¢ Wings #82 (1947) --$1.00 Young King Cole #41 (1947)--$1.00

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Wanted

Superman #2 Batman #1-30 Action #1-20 Detective #30-60 both World's Fairs All Star--any More Fun #52 on Adventure #40 to 102 Star Spangled #1-20 and on All Zoro One Shots any foreign comics Harvey Hits Feature Books Flash #1-104 Green Lantern #1 on Sensation #1-10 Comic Cavalcade #1-5 Whiz #5-10, 15-20 Mastre #1-6 Nickel #1-6 Special Edition Slam Bang #1-5 America's Greatest #1 Captain America--all Young Men and Men's Adventures--all with heroes Sub Mariner--all Human Torch---all Marvel Mystery #1-20 All Winners--all Mystery Men #1-15 Fantastic #5-10 Wonderworld #15-20 Amazing Man #1-10 Black Hood #9-15 Blue Beetle #1-7 Hangman #5-8 Top Notch #1-30 Pep #5-9 Zip #1-10 Blue Ribbon #1-15 Jackpot #1-5 Shield Wizard #1-5 Target #1-12 Blue Bolt #1-12 Super Mystery #1-10 Lightening #1-10 Four Favorites #1-10 Banner #1 Our Flag # 1-6 Stuntman--all Fighting American #1-5 Pocket comics Flash give-aways AND ALL OF THE FOLLOWING: Daring Mystery, Kid Comics, Mystic, Young Allies, USA, Tough Kid Squad, Amazing Comics, All Select Complete Comics, any original art, first Thor. I will also buy any of my wants. I may even trade for a contribution for my zine Crypt/Armageddon but send contributions anyway! More wants--Big All American. I have many SECRETS BEHIND THE COMICS available for trade also. The following fanzines are also wanted: Slam Bang #1-3, Golden Age #1, Xerp--any, All Star #1-3, SSC #2, 3. The first issue of Crypt contained an article by Glen Johnson on All Star, John Klimcheck on EC, Steve Kelez on the Fly and Captain Marvel, Larry Herndon and myself on a GL index, plus ads, Kelez and Schwaberow cover and illos, Dubay back cover, and the Crypt Extra. All this for 25¢ mailed in an envelope. #2 will have an offset cover but no orders yet! I've this for trade: Ghost Rider #1, 4, 5 and Golden Arrow #3, Captain Marvel Jr. #73, All American #101, 102 WOW #42 (3/4 cover), 46, Action #86 (nbc), Master #66 (3/4 cov.), Popular #128, photo copys of some Ditko silver proofs. Want Captain Marvel #1-50, Ghost Rider #2 on, The Avenger--all, Jet Powers-all, Buck Rogers #1-6, King #1-20, Ace #70-90.

TCR PRESENTS: THUNDER AGENTS

by

Derrill Rothermich

A new company--Tower Publications--enters the comic market with Thunder Agents #1 dated November 1965. With just this one issue Tower establishes itself as one of the leading companies as far as quality is concerned. First of all, they avoid a mistake that constantly plagues other comics--not allowing enough room for plot development. A giant comic with just a few characters has been needed for a long thim but
been needed for a long time but so far no one has been willing to take a chance on the success of such a book. Yet Tower was perfectly willing to do so with the first book that it has published. I just hope that it meets with the success it deserves.

A special team of UN agents parachute to a remote mountain lab to find that Professor Jennings has been killed by WARLORD. It seems that Warlord has been trying to steal every scientific invention he can so as to aid his attempt to conquer the world. However, because of the inoportune arrival of the UN agents he was forced to leave three devices behind. One is an "electron molecular intensifier belt which makes the wearer's body structure equal to the consistency of steel." The second is an invisibility cloak and the third a cybernetic helmet which amplifies a man's brain power many times. THUNDER--The Higher United Nations Defense Enforcement Reserves--then seeks three men to use these devices against the Warlord.

The first choice is Leonard Brown who had been working in the administration department. He dons the belt and after letting it attune itself to his body turns the dial. He finds that his body is now several times denser than normal matter, his weight has increased greatly, and he has fantastic strength. However to avoid the mistake of making him too all-powerful, there is a drain on his energy which can kill him if continued for prolonged periods of time. DYNAMO doesn't have to wait long to get into action because at that very time, the IRON MAIDEN--an agent of Warlord--has had an artificial fog placed over a city so that her robots can loot rare radioactive materials from scientific warehouses. Dynamo parachutes into the city at the request of the President in an attempt to lift the fog and stop the looting. He battles the robots but has to submit to capture after he passes the time limit for safe operation of his belt. He awakes later to find himself chained in the Warlord's stronghold and his belt missing.

The scene now switches to the second weapon. Doctor Dunn and Professor Jennings had developed a method of transferring human "brains" by electrical impulses to an android body but this had never been tested. Dr. Dunn was an old man with not much longer to live and so he wanted to try the invention in a desperate chance to gain immortality. The experiment succeeds and he is able to transfer his "brain" from one android to another at will. He then puts on the invisible cloak and becomes No-Man. Another agent of Warlord--Demo--is planning to steal valuable chemicals with a race of underground dwellers. No-Man is notified of this attack and

and speeds to stop it, taking along a spare body in case it is necessary to change. As soon as he becomes invisible he enters the lab and attacks the sub-human mole men. However his advantage of invisibility is soon lost when a wild shot by Demo sprays a chemical on him. Finally a bullet destroys Dunn's android body and Demo escapes. NO-Man had then transferred his "brain" to the spare body he had left out in his car and returned to recover his cloak.

Back an THUNDER headquarters, Mr. Janus (he is never given a first name) is making fantastic scores on all entrance exams and is quickly accepted into the organization. However back at his apartment he contacts Warlord and the readers learn that he is in THUNDER for the express purpose of helping Warlord recover these 3 inventions of Dr. Jennings. Janus volunteers to test the third device--the cybernetic helmet. After putting it on he is able to read minds and stops a falling computor by means of pure mental energy. However, the most astonishing thing is that the helmet causes a subconscious change in Janus, causing him to do only good as long as he has it on. When he removes the helmet, he can't remember what has happened. The next day, according to plans, Janus disconnects all THUNDER protective devices which allows the Warlord's raiders to enter. He puts on the helmet to help them but instead uses his vast brain power to defend THUNDER. Warlord then sends a virtually indestructable monster into the battle but it is destroyed when Menthor decoys it in front of a cobalt radiation dynamo.

When Warlord switches his attack to the Weapons Development Laboratory, the Thunder Squad is called into action. Each member is a well-trained, highly-skilled specialist. Guy is the leader, Dynamite a weapons expert, Kitten a technical device expert, "Weed" a lock-smith, and "Egghead" a super-brilliant strategist. The Warlord's army this time is a vast force of androids completely under his mental command. By means of an underground tunnel, the zombies are able to capture a newly developed laser gun. When the Thunder squad arrives, they locate the tunnel and dig down to it to attack the androids from the rear. Guy and Dynamite knock out two of them and put on their uniforms. Much to their surprise, they find that they are now under the mental control of the Warlord. The others rush to aid them by using their combined mental powers to combat the mental empulses. They succeed and get close enough to recapture the laser gun and turn it on the zombies. In an attempt to gain sore victory, Warlord then announces that he has captured Dynamo.

Back at the Warlord's stronghold, the Iron Maiden is trying to get Dynamo to reveal the secret of the belt. He refuses and she begins experimenting with it in an attempt to learn how it works. She only succeeds in releasing a high frequency radio signal which is picked up back at THUNDER. The Thunder Squad, Menthor, and No-Man pick up the signal and all head for the island. One of the Iron Maiden's soldiers leaves the island with the belt to try to decoy THUNDER away from it. However he is unsuccessful and No-Man captures him. The Thunder Squad uses the new laser gun to destroy missiles that are going to be used to stop them. Dynamo is chained at the mouth of a cave to serve as a shield for the Iron Maiden and Warlord. No-Man uses his invisibility to get the belt to him and Dynamo breaks free. During the confusion, both Warlord and the Iron Maiden manage to escape.

The one thing that is most noticiable about this issue is the excellent art throughout. The cover and the first, second, and final chapters are the results of some of the best art that Walley Wood is currently doing with the possible exception of his great work on TOTAL WAR. This is far better than any of the work he ever did on Daredevil. Wood's work on Daredevil was never as exceptional as his work normally is. As to why this was the case I guess we will never know. Still as good as Wood's art was, it wasn't the best in the issue. This honor would have to go to the superb No-Man chapter illoed by Reed Crandall. I suppose that all of you noticed his initials on the computor in the last panel? It is always a delight to see Reed's work and I hope that it appears in THUNDER again in the future. The Menthor chapter was penciled by Sekowsky but I can't tell who did the inking. While this chapter would have to rank on the bottom of the list as to the artistic ability displayed, it is still of special note for the simple fact that it is by far the best art that Sekowsky has done for a long time and far superior to his terribly work in JLA. Maybe this is due to the inking but this is the first time in years that I have enjoyed his work. The Thunder Squad chapter is the work of George Tuska and while it is quite good still can't match Wood and Crandall. The art alone was sufficient to make this issue something special

Naturally this is another play on James Bond but still has a flavor all its own. With all the United Nations propaganda floating around, it is to be expected that it would eventually find its way to the comics. Still this aspect of it is not made very evident. While none of the characters are very original, Menthor and No-Man stand out as the two most interesting heroes. There have been several heroes who made use of brain power but the idea of having him as a spy in THUNDER is unique as is the change of personality when wearing the helmet. Careful development of these

two points can lead to many interesting plots. The invisibility cloak and the android body are ideas that have been used before but this is the first time they have been incorporated into a single hero. This was probably the best written chapter in the whole book. Dynamo's powers are too uninteresting to allow for much of a future. The Thunder squad is simply a bad copy of the Challengers.

By putting these three separate heroes and a single group under a single command, the author can easily bring them together to combat the single menance while still allowing for individual adventures. Actually, the Menthor and No-Man tales are complete in themselves. Despite the length for detail, there is still a maze of inconsistancies. The most outstanding one is just how Menthor managed to get accepted into THUNDER. That doesn't show much ability for their screening process. If they run the rest of the organization in that manner, it is a miracle that they have lasted this long. Despite these inconsistancies and the weakness of several of the characters, this can become a truely great comic plotwise as well as artwise if the writer takes sufficient time to develop good plots. One possible pitfall is the over use of Warlord and his allies. A little variety is absolutely necessary. It also would be a good idea not to bring them together every issue.

Next issue, Glen Johnson will have a review of Steel Sterling and Thunderbolt with an illo by Howard Keltner. Watch for it!

Please make sure that you send the correct amount of money when you order TCR. It is easier for you to do this than for me to have to return the change.

VENDRE has been cancelled due to lack of response. So if you haven't received your refund yet it will arrive shortly.

I have been unable to get hold of some of the newspaper comic strips that I want--especially MANDRAKE. If one of your local papers carries this strip, let me know and maybe we can work out a trade. My other wants include: the daily SUPERMAN and TARZAN strips.

Derrill

QUOTES FROM THE READERS

Paul Thompson
21 Thrush Street
Carpentersville, Ill.

There are quite a few reprints hitting the stands nowadays, from annuals to IW/Super to half the contents of Disney and the new Harvey comics. And for a good many fans these reprints are welcome, since the number of fen who have had the privilege of possessing these stories in the original publication is a bit to the minute side.//What I would like to see is a sort of index to these reprinted stories, listing first and second publications. The benefits are apparent: prospective article writers can fill in some of the gaps in their information and fans could learn which material came from which period of comics (would give an idea to trends as well as how individual characters developed, would it not?).//The most convenient organization would be to have a central gatherer; and whenever a fan would happen to run across a reprint of a comic he owns first publication of, he could gather the title of the story, perhaps main character and artist, number and title of periodicals in which the story appeared, and simply send the listing to said central figure.//For central organizer, I blushingly suggest myself. My fanac is hardly so numerous as to interfer with this project, or the other way around, as it might with those fen a bit more known than I. More important, I have a personal desire to see this project through. ((Here is a project that I have a great deal of interest in. Since I have never seen many of these reprints before either I am always seeking information on them but this is very difficult to find as there is currently no central gathering point for it. Every now and then I run across some of it scattered throughout fandom but it takes a major effort to find it. Such an index would greatly benefit all fans--both old and new. Since no one is working on such a project, further communication between Paul and I set the stage for a beginning. I forwarded what little information I did have and I hope all of you will do the same. How about it fans? Send all reprint information you have to Paul and this index can get started. If you have any questions, please write directly to Paul.))

David Colton
366 East Grand Street
Mt. Vernon, New York

Although I have been reading comics all of my young life, I only recently discovered fandom. On the whole, I feel that it has done an effective job of enhancing my appreciation of the talents of those who lie behind each issue of every comic I buy.//But there is an atmosphere in fandom that has, for me, at least, considerably reduced its effectiveness. Most of fandom seems extremely preoccupied with the past rather than the future. On the pages of most fanzines, The Golden Age Of Comics is mentioned reverantly in hushed tones with awe and respect. As I read of the early adventures of Jay Garrick and Sub-Mariner in the pages of the fanzines, I grew more and more anxious to read for myself some of these prized issues of the past. It seemed to me that any comics rated superior to today's excellent product must surely be tremendous.//Eagerly I sent in for a random sampling of these early comics, and paid the ridiculously high prices charged. After receiving and reading a good number of these comics, I was sorely disappointed. Aside from a certain, I suppose you could call it an historic, appeal, these comics were far inferior to todays comics. The art is primitive compared to Infantino's work; the stories weak and lifeless next to modern-day Fox or Lee. To me, the over-all atmosphere was one of boredom and disappointment. How anyone can rate the original Flash's adventures superior to the Barry Allen version is beyond me! The great Joe Kubert's early art is nothing next to his present-day work. Even the much-revered JSA is, in my opinion, far inferior to today's JLA, which is not exactly my idea of a great comic anyway.//I guess the Golden Age can be compared with the silent films. While they brought a sense of wonder at the time, they can only be called inferior to today's wide-screen, color, and stereophonic films of today.//I think fandom should pay more attention to the present and future of comics and not with the almost morbid pre-occupation with comics of the past. ((Well, fans! I leave it up to you to answerthe comments Dave has made and I would imagine that some of you will have much to say. As for the high prices of these old books, I see no possible remedy for this as long as the US still operates on the free market idea. As long as the dealers are able to get those prices no amount of complaining will do any good. What Dave failed to take into account when hurrying to buy these old comics is there is a distinct possibility that his opinion just might be different that those of the writers of the articles he read. No two people always like the same things and this also applies to comics. For instance, I find that I greatly enjoy the same issues of JSA that he dislikes. So who is right? It all boils down to a matter of personal preference. I sincerely doubt that fandom has a morbid preoccupation with the past. The reason that most zines dwell on the past is that most of the readers are fully familiar with todays comics so there is no need for long articles discussing last month's issue of Flash or Fantastic Four. A broad generalization that today's comics are better than those of the Golden Age is based entirely on personal opinion and has no basis in fact --at least if they do I have never heard of it.))

Rick Weingroff
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Baltimore, Maryland

Danny Cassidy's current letter has all the wonderful generalizations which we come to know and love in Danny. "Realistic artists know that a true art critic looks behind the characters, too." Perhaps so, but there are no comic book critics and I doubt seriously that they would criticize Infantino because he occasionally puts in panels sans backgrounds. Danny fails to consider the limitations of the artform. In a small panel, Infantino must put in the speaking characters plus dialog --and have room for the background. It would be unfair to judge a comic artist because he occasionally uses blank backgrounds since this is a necessary evil of the "artform."//As a matter of fact, I challange Danny to find the artist who doesn't use blank backgrounds at least occasionally. Bob Kane, who Danny admires so greatly, is not above use of the blank backgrounds. In Batman #166 for example Bob Kane uses eight (as I interpret them) blank background panels.//Danny's next point involves Doug's comment that Infantino has been using elaborate backgrounds in Detective. Danny ignores the comment by saying, "you're probably giving the wrong man credit!" I doubt that very much. I'll give you a perfect example. Again looking at Batman #166, turn to page 7, panels 1 and 2. Then turn to Detective #327, page 2, panels 1 and 2. Here you see Infantino's realistic backgrounds compared to Kane's realistic backgrounds. One is straight, grey, simple. The other ornate, impressionistic. Don't blame Doug Potter if Infantino sees the world more artistically than Kane. And if Danny insists that Infantino's drawing was special since the scene was a Greenwich Village type place rather than a standard city scene, just thumb through "Deep Freeze Menace" for some examples of the sorry backgrounds that Danny hates so much.//His criticisms of Infantino's action shots is somewhat valid. Infantino doesn't have the imagination to create action scenes that Jack Kirby has. But don't blame what you dislike on the "wrong man," Danny. Gardner Fox plans the action scenes, and Infantino only puts into effect what Gar says. If Gardner takes two pages to show a fight, then Infantino has no choice but to take two pages. Blame Fox, not Infantino, for his dragging out the action scenes. And, after all, is it such a crime?//I had to laugh when Danny claimed he expressed his opinion but at least backed it up with facts. Yeah, facts like--"His art in Detective #339 was especially sorry." There's a fact to rank with the immortals. And his view that Infantino's dragging out the action ruins the stories is just his opinion--I personally find Infantino's action scenes quite enjoyable. That's an opinion and I'll not bother to substantiate it.//Danny goes on to chastise the cover selections in the Alley Poll. I personally don't see what the difference is. The point of the selection is which cover is best. If it takes five men to get a great cover--the cover is still great, isn't it? We pick Best Artist in another category; this is for best cover. Don't get the two confused. Now we come to another tremendous opinion backed by fact: "National isn't the leader in story and art. Almost everyone will agree that DC has no writing ability at all. Gardner Fox can't write...Those sad Flash yarns are proof of that." Hot dog! That's what I like, cold, hard fact. Clear, straight-forward logic.//In the term of sales, and the like, Marvel is way below Charlton. Not two years ago, Flash sold more than 300,000 copies per month. I know for a fact that Strange Tales sells only 215,000 copies, a far cry from 300,000 of Flash. I don't know which "almost everyone" Danny is referring to, but I've yet to see it. Certainly those 300,000 readers of the Flash would disagree. And those 800,000 readers of Superman. And those (perhaps) 500,000 readers of Batman. And those 240,000 readers of Aquaman.//"Those sad Flash yarns" might be true. I disagree and rather think that is a personal opinion which can neither be proved or disproved. Danny dislikes them--I think they are excellent. So who is right?//Next Danny asserts that Elongated Man is a direct imitation of Plastic Man. All comic heroes are a direct imitation of Doc Savage and a few others, and it can be traced further back than that. So what does Danny want? Moreover, Elongated Man's powers may be similar but Fox hasn't ever attempted to capture the flair of Plastic Man. If Plastic Man were revived today, we fans (particularly the older ones) would hate it---because it couldn't possibly capture the style of Jack Cole and some of the others who worked on the original. Elongated Man is good because it is different--a mystery character with humanness-for comics. It might imitate Plastic Man in power, but you have to consi-

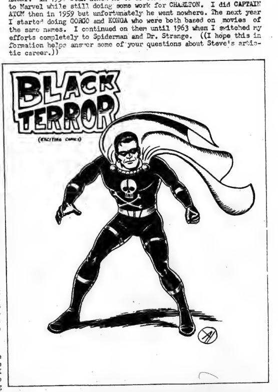
der it for its own merits, comparison aside.//If Danny considers Jon Swartz impolite, he won't have much patience for me, either. Succinctly, Jon expressed the exact sentiments which I expressed above (save for his views on Kubert). Danny is entitled to his opinion, but he hasn't succeeded in convincing me of anything as yet (save perhaps he doesn't know what he is talking about). But then again, maybe when I see that article in the zine "most all read.."//I happened to see a movie on the unafiliated local station on Thursday, September 23, 1965 that might be of interest to comic fans. According to the local TV guide: " Demon Of Outer Space" (Japanese, 1964). Spies from the planet Sapphire force a Japanese scientist to aid them in their plans for invading earth. It stars Ken Utsui and Junko Ikeuchi.//But the big thing is, this movie starred STAR MAN. It was not THE Star Man, merely a "Made in Japan" version, but still a super-hero, still in long underwear, and still an obvious Superman imitation. The movie, unfortunately, was so poor that I couldn't help but laugh when the picture finally reached its climax.//Star Man had a steel body and came from the Emerald Planet. I mention the latter despite the fact that I don't know what it means--I missed the first half hour of the movie. ((George Detrow solves this problem: "When the inhabitants of the Emerald Planet learned that the planet Sapphire was intending to conquer the earth, they sent Star Man to earth to protect us from the invaders." ed.)) I came in as Star Man was flying through outer space, chasing the space ships of the invaders, the Superians. The flight sequence was about as bad as the Superman stunts--facial views and long distance side views. Other than that they aren't much to speak of.//The only technical advance made came when the hero landed on a ledge, jumped to the floor and then had to return to the ledge. Rather than lift him up, the film editors ran the jump from the ledge in reverse. It was fairly effective and could have been improved with a bit of work to near perfection for the stunt.//The climaz was a literally ten minute battle between Star-Man and the Superian soldiers, hand-to-hand! It started on the ledge, when Star Man threw the villains to thefloor and punched and jabbed them. He leaped down and continued the process. But the stunt work was so bad, it was plainly seen that he never landed a punch, and hardly ever came within two feet of any jaws or stomachs. Villains would somersault over him as he ducked. They'd bump into each other intentionally as he stepped aside. Entirely bad. He would chop, kick, slash, and punch, never landing a single blow but killing them anyway, and they would charge him anyway (I think this may be a cultural problem which is difficult for the American viewer to understand: the value of human life in Japan is such that it is probably quite believeable that the soldiers should charge him, knowing they'll be killed, where as in A-merica, it is purely unbelievable because of the esteem withwhich we honor human life).//He, unlike Batman, was quite willing to use a gun and was, indeed, a gifted marksman.//I mentioned before that I got a laugh out of the climax. But let me explain why. During the entire battle, all the fighting would stop, just long enough for Star Man to flex his muscles and laugh haughtily. But one time he actually executed a series of three hand springs to get to another part of the room. He continued the fight and several seconds later, when he wanted to return to the old spot, executed three backward cartwheels (actually, the film was run in reverse). To be believed, and to be appreciated as camp, you had to see this scene.//It's difficult to say if the actor portraying Star Man had any acting ability. I suspect not however. In the hour I watched it, he said about six lines--those rather short. And though the emotions were well handled, it should not be forgotten that the voices were dubbed in--in Japanese, this actor was probably about as talented as Johnny Weismuller.//The movie was pretty bad by any standard--the best part was the hero's costume. It was skin tight. Really! Not baggy like Superman and Batman's old movie costumes, but actually skin tight. Unfortunately, the actor was a bit more muscular in the stomach than the chest, and his biceps were only slightly larger than my own (which isn't saying much, really). He wore, by the way, a hood quite similar to the real Star Man's--save instead of the crest, he wore a bent antenna. ((Rick goes on with comments about other things including my review of Slam Bang but this is all I have room to print. I debated about making this letter into an article but didn't think it was necessary. Thanks Rick for taking time to send in the report on the movie. I appreciate it because my chances of seeing it is very slim indeed. As a matter of fact, I see absolutely no TV and I am sure there are others in a similiar position.))

RONN FOSS
924 GEORGE
VAN WERT, OHIO

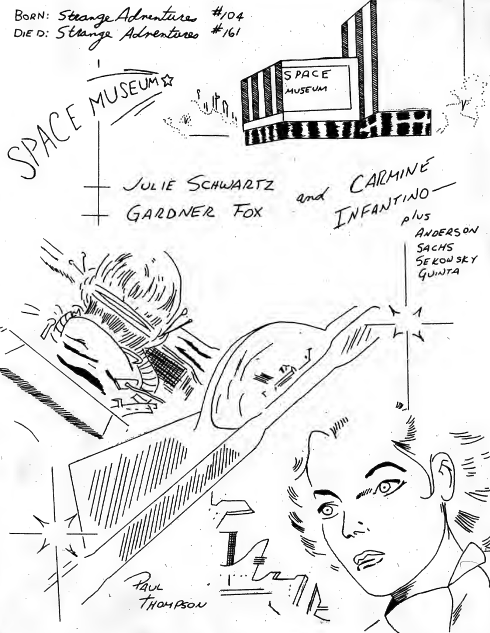
I'm very anxious to do FOX but won't be able to begin until after October 8. Aside from working 10-12 hours, 6 days a week, I am about to marry Coreen Casey. We are to be married October 3 at her home in Illinois and then are moving to Florida. About December we intend to begin a friendzine--most likely a general-type amamag, primarily a vehicle for our creative expression, probably very little contributions (certainly none solicited), and hopefully interesting letter discussions on varied topics. Designed as a friendzine, it won't be available to general readership but will go out mainly to specific friends, other fan publishers, etc. In all probability, we will not establish a publication schedule but rather will gear consecutive issues in accordance with reader response and our inclinations. If anyone wants to make a reservation for the first very limited edition, they can write me at my new address as it appears in TCR #43. ((I want to take this opportunity to wish both Ronn and Coreen the best of everything in the future. I think that you readers now realize why FOX is being delayed a little. However, FOX will definitely be in TCR #43. Watch for it.))

STEVE DITKO
(Address withheld--
policy)

I am sending you the following information to answer many of the questions frequently asked about me. I was born in 1927 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Through the years I became interested in doing comic art and went to New York to enter the comic book field. I enrolled in the Cartoonist And Illustrators School where my style was greatly influenced by my instructor--Jerry Robinson.//During the next three years I regularly made the rounds of the comic publishers and just as regularly had been turned down. My first job was with a very small comic publisher. However, this job sed to HEADLINE PUBLICATIONS where I worked on BLACK MAGIC. This was the period of the short-lived 3D. During this time I worked as inker with others on HARVEY'S 3-D books and on Simon and Kirby's CAPTAIN 3-D. Later in 1953, I became a regular artist for CHARLTON PRESS, working in their line of fantasy books including THING and THIS MAG IS HAUNTED. Early in 1954 I had to leave New York and gave up comic illoing. I was away from the comic scene for over a year and a half, returning in the last part of 1955 to work for Stan Lee at MARVEL.//During 1956, I drifted away from MARVEL and back to CHARLTON PRESS. For the next year I did work only for CP--including MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER, DR. HAUNT. In 1958 Stan asked me to do some more work so I returned to Marvel while still doing some work for CHARLTON. I did CAPTAIN ATOM then in 1959 but unfortunately he went nowhere. The next year I started doing GORGO and KONGA who were both based on movies of the same names. I continued on them until 1963 when I switched my efforts completely to Spiderman and Dr. Strange. ((I hope this information helps answer some of your questions about Steve's artistic career.))



The illo above by Alan Hutchinson isn't listed under the list of contributors for the simple fact that I didn't get it until about five hours before this issue goes to press. I had been planning something else for this space but thought you would enjoy the drawing more.


BORN: Strange Adventures #104
DIED: Strange Adventures #161
SPACE MUSEUM☆
SPACE
MUSEUM
JULIE SCHWARTZ
GARDNER FOX
and
CARMINE
INFANTINO—
plus
ANDERSON
SACHS
SEKOWSKY
GUINTA
PAUL
THOMPSON

THE EGO CRUSHER

by

Jim King

VOICE OF COMICDOM #5 (Marty Arbunich, 60 Gladys Street, San Francisco, California 94110--irregularly--offset--$ .25 or 5 for $1) This is comicdom's first newspaper type zine and its first year of publication has established it as one of the best around and this issue is no exception. The only way that it has fallen short is that it was originally intended as a monthly publication but it has yet to achieve this status. This may be for the best because Marty doesn't have to fight a deadline but can concentrate on retaining its high quality. There are a couple of choice news tips plus articles on two pros: Segar, creator of Popeye, and Jack Burnley of Star-Man fame. Again there are four pages of amatuer strips including The Cloak by Kelez and Dubay, The Eye by Biljo White, The Web (a clever satire on James Bond and UNCLE) by Bill Dubay, and Solano The Brave by Ronn Foss. All four are excellent and it is hard to pick one as being better than the rest. There is also a sneak preview of the next Cloak tale which is to be written by Bob Overstreet and drawn by Landon Chesney. It looks as if it will be tremendous. Bob's story line is bold and should strike a stiff blow at racial and religious hatred while Landon's artwork will easily be equal to his fine effort in FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #2. Otto Binder's column is filled with interesting facts and comments which include a listing of some of the comic heroes he worked on before Captain Marvel, a listing of some of the many other characters he worked on during and after CM, and comments about Murphy Anderson and his current job at DC. This issue closes with an article about Mandrake which is far too short to be effective and a new column entitled PHANTOM TRAVELER featuring info about fanac in different states--this time about Texas. The zine's layout is excellent and both Bill and Marty's writing styles have improved immeasurably over the last couple of years. This is an excellent zine and I can only hope that it stays that way in the future. (A)

YANCY STREET JOURNAL #10 (Marty Arbunich, 60 Gladys Street, San Francisco, California 94110--irregularly--offset--$ .15 or 7 for $1) As Derrill predicted in TCR #40, the litho format proved overwhelmingly popular with YSJ's readers and Marty has decided to retain this in all future issues. This issue features an article on Joe Orlando who was at Marvel only long enough to do three issues of Daredevil. This one is better written and more interesting than the one in the last issue. There is a news section but most of the info is outdated. Have you ever wondered about the true identies of Mr. Fantastic and Spiderman?? Well, check with the editorial column and you will see a mildly humorous drawing of these two with Marty as Mr. Fantastic and Bill as Spiderman. The discussion column is as interesting as ever with the debate being over those cliffhanger endings that Stan has been using in most of the Marvel tales today. Lee Whittlesey gives an interesting discussion on the Atlas horror books but is hampered by lack of space for complete development. The Yancy Street Walker by Steven Kelez reverts back to the form of its early days with what is an excellent satire on Dr. Strange's search for "Eternity". Levram is now searching for "Infinity". It is carefully plotted and beautifully executed. Steve Perrin ends his long series of articles on Captain America with the quick conclusion that ol' Cap is back on the right track again. I am sorry to see this column go as it had always been quite good. The Picto-Origins featured Blue Blaze this time with the origin of Namora to appear next issue. It is quite amazing that Bill's litho art is far better than anything he has done in ditto. A two panel cartoon and a contest complete the issue but the cartoon would have been better left out as it did nothing but waste space. For you Marvel fans, this zine is a must. (B+)

ALTER-EGO #9 (Roy Thomas, 307 Greensferry Road, Jackson, Missouri 63755--irregularly--offset--$ .75) From cover to cover this issue of AE again shows that it is indeed the most professional fanzine being published. Roy demands nothing but the very best from the contributors and that is exactly what he gets. This issue features double-sized cover with both front and back being one scene showing eight of the Mexican comic heroes. The lead article is the second part of Fred Patten's article about the Mexican comic scene with the third and final segment scheduled for next issue. Since Ronn was late with the WARRIOR OF LLARN strip, Roy was left with the job of filling the extra pages. There is a pictorial segment with commentary by Otto Binder, reprints of some newspaper articles about fandom, a drawing of The Eclipse by Ronn, a special report on the National Cartoonist Society by Jerry Bails, plus what is some of the best satire yet to come from the magic pen of Dr. Thomas. Without a doubt much of it is far the heads of many of his readers but as Roy once said before--you can't please everyone. Using poetry as a vehicle for this satire is a novelty that only one with Roy's great command of the English language would even begin to attempt. My praise to an amazing talent. Glen's JSA article this time is a review of the Injustice Society tales. Shel Kagan is present with an article which discusses the parallels between Green Lantern and the Lensmen of sf fame. Roy also includes an unusual commentary on the career of Paul Dennis in "I, Robotman". The final items include an interesting editorial, the letter column, and a previously unpublished Mr. Tawney strip written by Otto Binder and drawn by CC Beck. While this issue isn't as good as it would have been with the WARRIOR strip, the simple fact remains that it is a masterpiece as only Roy knows how to create. As long as AE continues to feature such high quality art and articles by fandom's greatest talents, it will retain its current position of greatness. (A+)

THE SCHWARTZ INDEX #1 (James Weston, 4220 East-West Highway, University Park, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782--offset-mimeograph--$1) While there is no publishing schedule, the editor says that there will be another issue with additions and corrections. The cover is an offset drawing of Green Lantern signed by Gil Kane. The only other offset page is the content page. As the title indicates the purpose is to give the readers information about the titles that Schwartz has edited during the last few years. It gives the date of each issue plus story titles and length and the name of writer and pencil and ink artists. This gives a lot of useful information. However, the layout is poorly planned and at times confusing. This is the type of publication that doesn't need to be hurried. For this reason there is no excuse for the abundance of errors in typing. If the editor had taken a little extra time, the zines appearance would have been greatly improved. Even though the price includes an envelope, the price is a little too high. (B)

STAR-STUDDED COMICS #7 (Larry Herndon, 1830 Highland, Carrollton, Texas 75006--irregular--offset--$ .50) While this issue had both its high and low points, the over-all effort was quite good. The cover by Keltner was one of the most colorful they have ever used but the over-use of green tended to dull the effect. Out of the five stories inside, two were excellent, two quite adequate, with the fifth being almost a complete loss. Richard Green continues to disprove the myth that he can only do humor well. As good as the first Human Cat tale was, this one is even better. In this one Kal-Kor battles the Coil, a human robot with a slightly different twist. Again Green captures top honors and with a character as original as Kal-Kor is this should continue to be the case in every appearance. The second tale is the worst. This is rather surprising because I have thought that this would be quite good. In the first place, the plotting was poor and far below the par of past Dr. Weird tales. It seemed logical that Chesney's style would be perfect for Dr. Weird and it would have been. However, Landon departed ratically from his style as established in FI #2. The reason for this is hard to understand but is quite a mistake. Biljo's entrance this issue is The Fog. This exciting hero has been absent for quite some time and returns to introduce a young partner, Misty. This was a mistake in that it will tend to slow down the future stories. The art and plotting are adequate but not as good as in the last Fog story. The second excellent story in this issue was, surprisingly enough, a text story--"Powerman Vs. The Blue Barrier" written by George R. R. Martin. He put in a magnificant effort which just might earn him the award for best fan fiction. The idea of using a mental force field is by no means new. However this becomes immaterial in view of his careful plotting and vivid descriptive action. For a while, he actually has the reader believing that Powerman has finally met his match. The only possible bad point about the story is that the bank robbery tends towards being too long. In an attempt to gain maximum effect, George almosts looses the readers attention. Usually the complaint goes the other way but there IS such a thing as dragging something out too long. The Defender story is written and inked by al Kuhfeld, penciled by Dick Tatge. The art tends to be weak but the plotting more than makes up for this. The Defender himself appears in only limited action but this is a refreshing change of pace. The origin of Crystal Stone's hypnotic jewels is never revealed but this add to the mystery. This could develop into a good series if properly handled. The back cover by Keltner again suffers a coloring fault which this time is too much red. This is the first time a wrap-around cover has been used and it gives the zine a much neater appearance. (A)

BATMANIA #7 (Biljo White, Box 115, Columbia, Missouri-- irregularly--mimeograph--$ .30+10) For this one issue, BATMANIA is a monthly but will return to its regular schedule for #8. The cover is as great as usual and shows Batman and Robin on TV. In light of one of the announcements in this issue of TCR, Biljo must be a mind reader. Biljo returns to the writting chores by completing the article he started in #2--"Batman Before Robin". He retells the last tale in which Batman appears alone. This is the tale that is more famous because of the scene of Batman using a machine gun on his plane in an attempt to kill. It is retolded so clearly that the reader gets the feeling that he is actually reading the comic. Tom Fagan gives a short but very interesting account of his trip to the New York ComiCon and suggests a similiar meeting of Batman fans. I am not sure just what kind of response this will get but for one I am all for it and I know that Derrill is also. "Profiles On Collectors" returns with an article on Marty Arbunich. "Comic Oddities", "The Batrader", and "The Batmanian Roll Call"make their regular appearances with the addition of a new surprise column--"The 007 Collector". This special supplement for James Bond fans is available separately from Biljo for 10¢. It is Bill's hope to make this a regular zine in itself. With the current Bondmania it should prove popular. The second issue will be separate from BATMANIA and sell for 15¢. (A)

TRADING POST #2 (Ross Kight, 1008 W. Leland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60640--quarterly--mimeograph--$ .40) This zine has absorbed the material originally scheduled for STAR and starting with the next issue will cost $ .50 an issue. Bill Dubay has several well drawn illoes featuring Captain America and The Green Lama in this issue. The Captain America illo was originally intended as the cover of STAR. Bill also has a three page action strip entitled The Surfer which while it does feature some good art is actually a waste of space. The story plot is nonexistant and the basic idea is very poor. There is an interesting report on the Cleveland Comicconclave written by Joy Holiday and featuring a dozen photos of the different fans who attended. A listing of the Tarzan newspaper daily strips, BLBs, and other items is reprinted from THE GRIDLEY WAVE #3 which gives much info to the Tarzan fan. There is also illoes of Tarzan in the style of many of the differentartists who have handled him. Bill Placzek has many comments on comics of the Golden Age with an occasional reference to today's product. However, the basic idea of his column is to dwell on the Golden Age. Other items include two full page reproductions of old comic covers--Adventure #40 (July 1939) and Captain America #5. The last 25 pages are devoted to ads. (C)

MASK AND CAPE #4 (Steve Perrin, 802 Font Blvd., San Francisco, California 94132--irregularly--ditto--$ .40+10) The offset cover by Bill Dubay sets an optimistic view point for the rest of the issue but it just doesn't fulfill the promise of the cover. Part of the trouble is unreadable reproduction. This isn't as flagrant as in past issues but is still annoying and unneccessary. The first story is entitled The Black Phantom and is illustrated by Ronn Foss and written by Steve. This text tale is something new and daring. Steve has risked offending some of his readers by creating a negro costumed hero to combat racial hatred. The tale is well written though at points tends to be a little too slow. However, the main point is that this is one of the few times that a fan has dared to comment on a very real situation today and reveal his personal fealings so strongly. I say BRAVO!! This story alone is worth the price of the issue. The second tale is the fourth of a series of episodes about Bantan Valiant. It is written by Maurice Gardner who always manages to amaze me. He has perfected one of the most boring writting styles that I have ever had the misfortune to read. These running tales with absolutely no plotting may appeal to some but not to me. After a few paragraphs, he succeeds in loosing any interesting that the reader might have had. The major effort is a 15 page text tale starring The Companions For Justice written by Steve and illoed by Hugh Surratt. The art varies in quality but on occasions is good. The story was fair with the major fault being the use of too many characters. Yet for some reason Steve managed to keep the tale from seeming as crowded as it really was. It is actually for the better that he couldn't get anyone to do the tale in a strip format. It would have taken a superb artist to handle that many characters well. Anything less than that would have made the strip a total loss. Steve also wrote an article about some of the many kid partners that were around in the 40s. He has an intertaining outlook on the subject that makes enjoyable reading even though pure facts are few due to the shortness of the article. The last feature is Tele--written by Steve and illoed by Rudi Franke and Bill Dubay. As a matter of fact, the only good point about this feature is the art which is quite good. Tele is an underseas dweller who born a mutant due to the effect of radiation his mother had absorbed as a result of an atomic experiment by the surface people. He reaches maturity in six years and can breath air (unlike the other members of his race). Tele also discovered he had tremendous mental powers including teleportation and telekinesis. He then goes to the surface world to attempt to prevent them from destroying themselves in a nuclear war. When it seems that nothing can stop this mass destruction, he suddenly appears at the United Nations, demonstrates his powers, and warns that he can explode the bombs before they leave their bases. How about that!! In the short space of six pages, Steve has solved the problems of the world. Pretty good trick, wasn't it. (C)

ODD #10 (Dave Herring, 164 Hartford Street, Natick, Massachusetts 01762--irregular--ditto--$ .20) This issue was a little uneven in quality with somewhat spotty reproduction being the only real complaint. However, this is easily balanced beautiful offset cover by Dave Herring. Easily the best part of the issue was the long 9 page satire on Mr. Novak--this entitled "Mr. Nozak". Instead of being one long tale it is a series of short, humorous incidents. Jay Kinney has an article on PANIC which is far too short to be effective. The two remaining satire strips are "Fandom" and "Iron Man" both of which are fairly well done but can't equal "Mr. Nozak". There is an article about MAD #2 by Dave which is quite good despite its shortness. There are the usual ads, letter column, and editorial. The art throughout is adequate throughout but only shows real quality on the front and back covers. Dave says that #11 will be out shortly so you can order both at the same time. (B)

VERY, VERY, VERY ODD #1 (Dave Herring, 164 Hartford Street, Natick, Massachusetts 01762--annually--ditto--$ .30) This issue is a reprint of some of the better features that appeared in the early issues of ODD. This giant issue includes such fine features as "Souperman" from ODD #1, "See Hunt" from #4, "Justice League of United States" from #8, "Joint" from #6, "Batmaniac" from #6, "Fidgitive" from #5, and "Blunder Woman" from #7. All of these are excellent satire but by far the best is "Justice League of the United States". If you missed the early issues of ODD, this is your chance to catch up on what you have been missing.

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Send orders to: Glen Johnson, P.O. Box 338, Crownpoint, New Mexico 87313.

The comics listed below are in good to mint condition with most being in near mint condition. I will give details upon request. Prompt refund on items already sold but alternate choices are appreciated. Include a quarter on orders under $2.50. All packages over $10.00 are sent fully insured but include a dime extra if you want smaller orders insured. There is a 10% discount on all orders over $5.00. All prices per each. Will consider bids on sets.

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